

PART V

Crops

Major Crops

Wheat and barley are the most important crops of Asotin County. Actually the cropping pattern is not very diversified. In 1954, wheat and barley together made up slightly over four-fifths of the harvested cropland. Wheat, for many years, has been the main crop. About 27,000 acres of wheat were harvested during 1958. Barley ranked second with 11,600 acres, or about one-fourth of the cropland. Alfalfa and small grains grown for grain are generally about the same in acreage. Oats are the fifth ranking crop and clover and timothy mixtures cut for hay are sixth. Fruits and several other minor crops are produced on the remaining acres of harvested cropland in Asotin County.

Crop Trends

The major crop trend in Asotin County since 1939 has been the rapid increase in wheat acreage followed by an equally rapid decline. Wheat acreage has declined by about one-third since 1953. Barley acreage dropped between

Total Acres of Land Harvested, 1954
47,588 acres

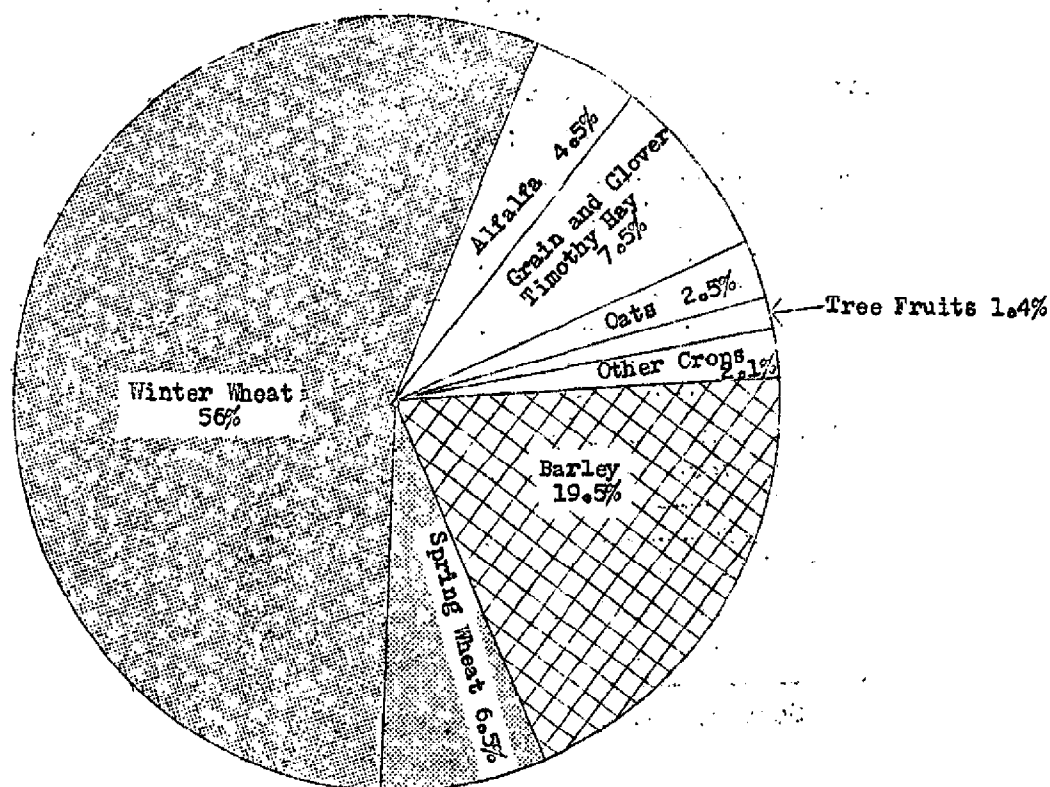


Figure 11.- Percent of Total Cropland in Leading Crops
Asotin County, 1954
(Based on U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1954)

1940 and 1952, then increased sharply after 1954. All harvested cropland increased by over 10,000 acres between 1940 and 1945 but there was a decline of about 2,000 acres after 1945. Most of the changes in the crop pattern of the county are a result of the Federal Wheat Acreage Allotment program. Under this program, with restrictions on wheat acreage on individual farms, land has been diverted to other crops and, in some cases, has been removed from cultivation. Barley and hay crops have increased in acreage during recent years. The acreage in clover and timothy mixtures grown for hay has increased steadily since 1939. A total of 840 acres were grown in 1955 compared with 80 acres during 1939. Alfalfa hay acreage declined sharply between 1944 and 1949 but the acreage devoted to alfalfa, however, has increased by one-third since 1955, reaching 2,400 acres. Orchard acreage has declined steadily since 1939.

Wheat Farming

In acreage and value wheat is the leading crop of Asotin County. Grown on the drylands, wheat was the first pioneer crop and has continued to be the major product of the region. Over 120 of the county's farms grew wheat in 1954. Most wheat farms are large in order to use machinery efficiently. Acreage increased from 26,000 acres to 42,800 acres between 1939 and 1946, then declined slowly to 38,800 acres in 1953. The Federal Wheat Acreage Allotment program began during 1954. Wheat acreage fell off rapidly and in 1956 only 26,000 acres of wheat were harvested. Asotin County wheat was back to its 1939 level after three years of the acreage diversion program.

Table 15.- Varieties of Wheat Grown
Asotin County, 1958

Classes and Varieties	Production (bushels)	Percent of Total Crop
<u>White Club Wheats</u>		
Omar-----	313,550	55.5
Golden-----	105,681	18.7
Requa-----	54,915	9.7
Burt-----	30,414	5.4
Elmer-----	23,865	4.2
<u>Common-White Wheats</u>		
Brevor-----	11,575	2.0
Idaed-----	14,660	2.6
Marfed-----	1,955	.5
<u>Hard-Red Winter Wheats</u>		
Turkey and Rio-----	7,986	1.4
Total all classes and varieties	564,600	

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Peak production was recorded in 1946 when 1,243,000 bushels were harvested. Wheat is grown on the summer fallow system and yields have varied with moisture conditions and fertilization practices. The range has been from a low of 20 bushels per acre in 1953 to a high of over 30 bushels per acre in 1956.

Table 16.- Wheat and Barley: Acreage, Yield and Production
Asotin County, 1939-1957

Year	All Wheat			Barley		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	26,000	21.2	550,400	3,500	24.5	85,700
1940	27,000	22.0	594,000	6,000	22.0	132,000
1941	24,000	29.1	698,400	6,300	28.0	176,500
1942	23,500	27.0	634,500	7,500	30.5	228,800
1943	24,300	28.1	684,000	6,600	29.0	191,400
1944	32,700	27.6	902,000	6,300	27.0	170,200
1945	38,200	26.1	996,400	5,700	27.0	154,000
1946	42,800	29.1	1,243,400	3,000	30.0	90,000
1947	40,000	24.0	958,200	3,100	21.5	66,600
1948	39,500	29.9	1,182,000	4,200	23.0	96,600
1949	38,600	20.7	798,400	5,500	19.0	104,500
1950	35,500	22.8	810,500	11,700	25.0	292,500
1951	37,000	29.8	1,102,000	4,200	26.0	109,200
1952	38,500	29.9	1,153,000	1,500	23.0	34,500
1953	38,800	19.9	773,700	4,000	27.0	108,100
1954	31,500	24.9	783,300	9,400	30.0	282,000
1955	25,000	24.8	621,000	11,500	20.0	230,000
1956	26,100	30.5	797,000	9,300	30.3	282,100
1957	23,900	31.8	760,600	11,200	31.0	347,200

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of WashingtonTable 17.- Spring Wheat and Winter Wheat
Asotin County, 1939-1957

Year	Spring Wheat			Winter Wheat		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	1,500	19.6	29,400	24,500	21.3	521,000
1940	2,000	11.0	22,000	25,000	22.9	572,000
1941	4,000	25.0	100,000	20,000	29.9	598,400
1942	4,500	22.0	99,000	19,000	28.2	535,500
1943	3,100	29.0	90,000	21,200	28.0	594,000
1944	3,300	22.9	75,600	29,400	28.1	826,400
1945	4,200	23.2	97,600	31,000	26.6	824,600
1946	2,800	23.5	65,800	36,000	29.5	1,062,000
1947	1,800	23.0	41,400	38,200	24.0	916,800
1948	1,500	28.0	42,000	38,000	30.0	1,140,000
1949	7,000	17.0	119,000	31,600	21.5	679,400
1950	3,000	21.0	63,000	32,500	23.0	747,500
1951	5,000	22.0	110,000	32,000	31.0	992,000
1952	2,500	22.0	55,000	36,000	30.5	1,098,000
1953	6,200	17.0	105,400	32,600	20.5	668,300
1954	5,800	21.5	124,700	26,800	24.5	656,600
1955	3,000	20.0	60,000	22,000	25.5	561,000
1956	2,100	31.0	65,100	24,000	30.5	732,000
1957	700	26.0	18,200	23,200	32.0	742,400

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Because of the seasonal moisture distribution, winter wheat (sown in the fall) produces higher yields and is preferred to spring-sown wheat. From 1949 to 1954 winter wheat acreage declined only 1,000 acres, whereas spring wheat acreage declined 4,000 acres to less than one-half its former total. Winter wheat plantings damaged by winter-kill, erosion or other climatic causes are generally reseeded to spring wheat.

Barley, Oats and Rye

Barley is the second most important crop. It is grown on the drylands using the same summer fallow system as wheat. Increase was rapid in the early 1940's, reaching a peak of 7,500 acres during 1942. Barley acreage then generally declined to a low in 1952 with the exception of 1950 when about 11,700 acres of barley were harvested. Since the beginning of the Wheat Acreage Allotment program, most of the acres diverted from wheat have been planted to barley. Barley was increased from 1,500 acres in 1952 to 11,500 acres by 1955. Production was varied from a high of 292,500 bushels in 1950 to a low of 34,500 bushels in 1952. Yields have ranged from over 30 bushels per acre during 1942 to 19 bushels per acre in 1949. A large amount of barley is used for feed on the farms where it is grown. About 115 farms grew barley in 1954.

Table 18.- Oats and Rye: Acreage, Yield and Production
Asotin County, 1939-1956

Year	Oats (grain)			Rye (for grain)		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	1,030	25.0	25,800	220	10.0	2,200
1940	1,000	20.0	20,000	280	10.0	2,800
1941	800	15.0	12,000	290	9.0	2,600
1942	1,150	27.0	31,000	190	20.0	3,800
1943	1,050	22.0	23,100	120	16.5	1,980
1944	930	24.0	22,300	--	--	--
1945	800	27.0	21,600	--	--	--
1946	560	28.0	15,680	--	--	--
1947	550	26.0	14,300	--	--	--
1948	420	22.0	9,240	--	--	--
1949	460	15.0	6,900	--	--	--
1950	680	25.0	17,000	--	--	--
1951	680	22.0	14,960	--	--	--
1952	700	22.0	15,400	--	--	--
1953	680	23.0	15,600	--	--	--
1954	1,270	23.0	29,250	--	--	--
1955	850	18.0	15,300	--	--	--
1956	260	38.0	9,880	--	--	--

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Oats are popular as a feed grain but seldom have been produced as a cash crop in Asotin County. Acreage harvested has fluctuated widely. Almost 1,300

acres were grown in 1954, but two years later less than 300 acres were harvested. Only 36 farms grew oats during 1954. Production totaled slightly over 29,000 bushels in 1954. Approximately half of the oat crop is fed on the farms where it is produced.

Small acreages of rye and mixed grains are sometimes grown. Almost no rye has been produced in the county since the early 1940's. In many years 200 to 300 acres of mixed grains are harvested. These minor grain crops are of little economic importance.

Hay Crops

Alfalfa and small grains grown for hay are the leading hay crops of Asotin County. Both of these were harvested from about 2,100 acres in 1954. Alfalfa increased rapidly after 1939, reaching a peak of 2,700 acres in 1944 but the acreage declined between 1944 and 1950. Only 1,800 acres were cut for hay in 1950 but about 2,400 acres were grown in 1955. Most of the alfalfa hay is used on the farms where grown. About 220 farms grew alfalfa for hay in 1954 and only 200 of the 3,300 tons of alfalfa hay produced were sold.

Small grains harvested for hay and feed have not been grown as widely in recent years as earlier. This is related to a decline in horses. About 5,600 acres of small grains were cut for hay in both 1940 and 1945. This total declined to 3,600 acres in 1949 and to 2,100 acres by 1954. Total hay acreage was about equal in both 1949 and 1954 with other hay crops making up for the decline in grain hay produced. About 100 farms grew grain hay in 1954 and almost 2,500 tons of grain hay were produced.

Table 19.- Clover-Timothy Hay and Alfalfa Hay
Acreage, Yield and Production
Asotin County, 1939-1955

Year	Clover and Timothy Hay			Alfalfa Hay		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)
1939	80	1.2	100	2,160	2.0	4,300
1940	110	1.4	150	2,220	1.5	3,400
1941	130	1.0	130	2,300	2.7	6,200
1942	130	1.3	170	2,450	2.7	6,500
1943	100	1.6	160	2,570	2.7	6,830
1944	60	1.3	80	2,700	1.5	4,100
1945	70	1.3	90	2,560	2.1	5,300
1946	80	1.4	110	2,040	2.0	4,100
1947	140	1.3	180	1,910	2.1	4,000
1948	200	1.5	300	1,760	2.5	4,400
1949	280	1.4	380	1,840	1.6	2,900
1950	360	1.4	520	1,800	2.0	3,600
1951	400	1.0	400	2,040	3.0	6,200
1952	520	1.3	670	2,070	1.0	2,100
1953	630	1.0	630	2,140	1.5	3,300
1954	780	.9	730	2,160	1.5	3,200
1955	840	1.2	790	2,400	1.9	4,500

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Minor hay crops and silage were taken from almost 1,400 acres in 1954. One-half of this total was clover and timothy grown as a mixture for hay. Clover and timothy has increased steadily from 80 acres in 1939 to over 800 acres in 1955. Wild hay was cut from only 20 acres in 1954. Other hay was harvested on 600 acres. One farm produced 24 acres of silage during 1954. Total hay and silage production was about 7,200 tons during 1954 which was only one-half ton per head of cattle, sheep and horses kept on Asotin County farms in that year.

Other Field Crops

A variety of minor crops are produced on small acreages. Potatoes harvested for home use or sale totaled 12 acres in 1954. Production of potatoes has declined since 1939 but yields per acre have been considerably higher in recent years. About 100 acres of dry field and seed peas were harvested during 1954 and another 250 acres of various field seed crops were produced. Virtually no field corn has been grown in Asotin County since the early 1940's. Although about two out of every three farms grow some vegetables for home use, only about 20 acres of commercial vegetables were reported by the U. S. Census in 1954.

Tree Fruits, Nuts and Grapes

Production of tree fruits is an important activity in localized sections of Asotin County such as Clarkston Heights and Snake River benchlands. In 1945 about 340 Asotin County farms maintained 1,100 acres of land in tree fruits. Several of the larger orchards were abandoned between 1945 and 1949 and by 1954 only 184 farms reported land devoted to fruits with a total of 640 acres used in this manner.

There has been a downward trend in fruit tree numbers since about 1910. The peak number of trees in most species was reached at that time. There were approximately 106,000 fruit trees in Asotin County in 1910 compared with only 22,000 in 1954. Peaches, cherries and apples were the most important fruits grown in earlier periods. In recent years, peaches, sweet cherries, pears, plums and prunes have been the most popular fruits. Fruits accounted for about 7 percent of Asotin County's farm income in both 1949 and 1954. Some farms produce a few grapes and nuts mainly for home consumption.

Table 20.- Bearing Fruit Trees
Asotin County, 1890-1954

Year	Apples	Cherries	Pears	Prunes & Plums	Peaches	Apricots
1890	2,411	312	326	384	1,697	304
1900	17,984	19,053	5,161	4,904	17,349	1,167
1910	18,344	23,179	3,437	5,552	53,457	1,786
1920	25,979	13,578	2,174	1,240	14,206	673
1930	15,034	17,162	3,374	10,327	25,979	3,229
1940	9,639	20,341	1,222	908	7,057	2,928
1950	8,797	9,207	1,429	810	9,172	2,554
1954	4,599	5,984	2,561	2,411	10,338	1,612

Sources: Washington Tree Fruits, Wash. Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, U.S.D.A. and Wash. State Dept. of Agriculture, Cooperating, 1952. U. S. Censuses of Agriculture, 1890-1954.